SURINAME:

Sexual orientation and gender identity-based rights violations

The right to family life

General:

The last 20+ years, Suriname has made incremental progress in legal protections for LGBTIQ+ people

- Gender-neutral social legislation and regulations
- Anti-discrimination legislation and regulations based on sexual orientation
- The administration of justice guarantees legal equality
- Inclusive private sector

However, the glaring lack of protection mechanisms and policies, as well as gaps in legislation, continue in practice to undermine the full exercise of human rights by LGBTIQ+ persons.

Issue I:

Adopt legislation and take measures to eradicate all forms of violence and discrimination against women, girls and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (Brazil, Chile, Italy, Fiji, Israel, Mexico, Argentina, Australia, Netherlands, Norway)

Seek training for law enforcement and judicial officers to ensure accountability for gender-based violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Ireland)

- A 2024 survey found that 67% of LGBTIQ+ respondents experienced discrimination in the prior year.
- Discrimination by non-State actors—including employers, religious institutions, and the general public—further restricts LGBTIQ+ people's access to work, services, and public spaces.
- Suriname lacks an independent police oversight body; all complaints against officers are handled internally.

Issue I:

Proposed Recommendations for adoption

- Enact comprehensive legislation prohibiting discrimination by State and non-State actors based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics, and ensure consistent enforcement.
- Adopt an independent police oversight body that impartially, promptly, and thoroughly investigates all claims of human rights violations by police officers.

Issue II:

Strengthen the efforts to combat all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, children and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (Italy and Chile)

- 86% of LGBTIQ+ individuals aged 16-25 reported problems with self-image due to bullying or discrimination.
- Displaced LGBTIQ+ youth face heightened risks of homelessness, exposure to violence and exploitation, barriers to education and healthcare, and increased risk of criminalization and mental health harm. There are no specialized shelters, family mediation mechanisms sensitive to SOGIESC issues, or coordinated social services for these youth.
- Despite the Government launching a zero-tolerance bullying policy in 2022, enforcement has been inconsistent.

Issue II:

Proposed Recommendations for adoption

- Develop targeted protection mechanisms, including emergency housing, psychosocial support, and family mediation for LGBTIQ+ youth displaced due to their identity.
- Explicitly prohibit conversion practices, including so-called conversion therapy, in law and policy
- In collaboration with LGBTIQ+ organizations, develop and fully fund public education campaigns on LGBTIQ+ people and their human rights to foster positive societal attitudes.

Issue III:

Make Article 80 of the Civil Code gender neutral to guarantee the full enjoyment of the right to family life by LGBTI+ persons (Iceland)

- Suriname's Civil Code, updated in 2025, still defines marriage as a union between a man and woman.
- In early 2025, a judge ordered Suriname to register the marriages of two same-sex couples wed abroad, citing Suriname's international treaty obligations—but no legislative change followed.
- The Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled in 2018 that same-sex marriage is a right under the American Convention on Human Rights, to which Suriname is a signatory; Suriname has yet to codify this protection.

Issue III:

Proposed Recommendation for adoption

- Amend Article 33, Book 1 of the Civil Code to permit same-sex marriage, compatible with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights decision, and make property, family, and inheritance law inclusive for LGBTIQ+ persons.

Note:

Our availability for bilateral meetings following this week will be virtually and in-person during the week of the 21st of September.

Thank you

for your attention